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This study investigated some aspects of elementary school guidance and counseling in the 50 states and the four American territories. Specifically such matters as number of counselors employed, their sources of financial support, professional background, certification and state standards were examined through the use of a questionnaire. Response was 100%. Results of this study were as follows: 6,041 counselors are now working in elementary schools in the 50 states, District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands. The majority are supported in part by federal funds with 36% being supported locally. Of the 6,041 counselors, 85-90% are trained in guidance and counseling. To date 23 states indicated certification requirements specifically for counselors at the elementary level. (Author)

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Status of Guidance and Counseling In The Elementary School

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This study investigated some aspects of elementary school guidance and counseling in the 50 states and the 4 American territories. Specifically such matters as number of counselors employed, their sources of financial support, professional background, certification and state standards were examined. Results of this study were as follows: 6041 counselors are now working in elementary schools in the 50 states, District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands. The majority are supported in part by federal funds with 36% being supported locally. 85-90% of the counselors are trained in guidance and counseling. To date 23 states indicated certification requirements specifically for counselors at the elementary level.

A 1967 study on the status of Guidance and Counseling in elementary schools revealed that there were 3,837 counselors working in elementary schools in 48 states (Van Hoose and Vafakas, 1968). The Van Hoose and Vafakas report was based upon 1966-67 school year data collected by means of a questionnaire from state departments of education. The 1967 study also investigated state standards, certification, and professional background of elementary school counselors.

Evidence from the above report and from earlier surveys reveals that elementary school guidance has grown steadily during the 1960's. Much of this growth can be attributed directly to federal financial support from the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) and from Title I Elementary and Secondary School Education Act (ESEA). However, it may be that the development and expansion of guidance at the elementary level results also in part from the increasing recognition of the need for this service for elementary school children.

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The interest and attention currently focused upon guidance for all children naturally stimulates questions regarding the status of guidance in grades K-6. Too, in any emerging movement, it seems important to have current information on growth trends, sources of financial support, and professional developments. It is for these reasons that the 1967 study was replicated. The present study sought answers to the following questions:

1. How many counselors are employed for the 1968-69 school year in elementary schools throughout the nation? How many are employed full-time, half-time, or less than half-time?

2. What are the major sources of financial support for elementary school counselors?

3. What is the professional background of persons employed as elementary school counselors?

4. What is the status of state standards and certification for elementary school guidance?

Procedures

In November, 1968, a questionnaire designed to secure answers to the above questions was mailed to state directors or supervisors of guidance in the fifty states, the four American territories and the District of Columbia. The accompanying letter, explaining the purposes of the study, also stated: "In this study we are interested only in those professionals whose major function is guidance and counseling in the elementary school. Generally these workers are called counselors, consultants, or guidance specialists. Please exclude persons whose major duties fall in the category of social work, attendance, psychological services etc." The directors were also asked to supply printed

material from their department regarding standards and certification.

There are some limitations of a study based upon data from state departments of education. Data provided by state department personnel are generally from reports compiled from numerous local school systems and possibilities for some errors are evident. These factors were considered in compiling the final report.

Results

From the 55 questionnaires mailed in November 1968, 36 responses were received within three weeks. Follow-up letters and telephone calls produced a 100 percent response by January 1969. Three of the four American territories reported that they had no elementary school counselors. Thus, fifty states and the Virgin Islands provided the data for these findings.

This study revealed that a total of 6,041 counselors are now serving in elementary schools in 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands. Of this number 70 per cent are employed full-time, 25 percent work half time or more as counselors, and the remaining per cent devote less than half time to elementary school guidance. Table 1. shows the number and percent of elementary school counselors by geographic region. The geographic regions used here are the same as those in the U. S. Office of Educstion report, Guidance Services In Elementary Schools (Smith and Eckerson 1966).

Table 1. Number and Percent of Elementary School Counselors by Geographic Region

Region	Elementary School Counselors N	%
New England	461	8
Mideast	1582	26
Southeast	1137	18
Great Lakes	675	11
Plains	345	6
Southwest	528	9
Rocky Mountains	126	2
Far West	1180	20
Virgin Islands	7	Less than 1
TOTAL	6,041	100

When these findings are compared with those from the 1967 study, it can be seen that the number of elementary school counselors has increased substantially in several regions. The greatest growth has occured in the Far West which has 1,180 elementary school counselors as contrasted with 528 in 1967. The Mideast and Southeast regions have also added several counselors during the past two years. The only region showing a slight decrease is New England, which had 484 elementary school counselors in 1967 and 461 in 1969. The significant finding

here is that there has been steady growth, and counselors are now working in some elementary schoolsin all 50 states. California appears to have the largest number with 838. New York state reports 750 and Pennsylvania 482.

The majority of elementary school counselors are supported in part by federal funds. However since 1967, there has been a marked increase in the number of counseling positions supported by local funds. In that study, Van Hoose and Vafakas (1968) found that 22 per cent of the 3,837 coujselors in elementary schoolswere supported locally. By contrast, the present study found that 36 per cent are supported by monies from the local school system. Table 2 shows the source of financial support for the 1968-69 school year.

Table 2. Sources of Financial Support for Elementary School Counselors

Source	N	%
Title V NDEA	2082	35
Title I ESEA	1307	22
Local Funds	2164	36
Other	488	7
TOTAL	6041	100

Some previous studies, notably Smith and Eckerson (1966), have included persons trained in school psychology and school social work in their surveys on elementary school guidance. Hill (1967) has also pointed out that some personnel workers who are called "Counselors" at the elementary level, are in fact school psychologists. In the past, this practice has contributed to the difficulty of determining with any degree of accuracy how much "guidance" or "counseling" is actually going on in some elementary schools. For this reason, both the 1967 study and the present investigation specifically requested that only "counselors" be included in the state eeports. As a further check, the respondents were asked to indicate the field of preparation of elementary school counselors in their state.

Forty-four respondents supplied data on this question. Nineteen of these, employing a total of 2,335 elementary school counselors, stated that 90-100 per cent of the counselorsin their elementary schools were trained in guidance and counseling. Fourteen additional states, employing another 1,618 counselors in grades K-6 replied that 75-90% had guidance and counseling preparation. Ten states estimated that 50-75 per cent were from guidance and counseling and one state, with 20 Counselors serving in elementary schools, replied that only 5 of these had training in guidance and counseling. Thus, it appears that a majority of counselors in elementary schools (ppssibly 85-90 percent),

are trained in guidance and counseling. A study of explanatory notes and copies of standards provided by several respondents, suggests a trend toward requiring a masters degree in guidance for all their elementary school counselors.

A fourth aspect of this study focused upon certification and state standards for guidance in elementary schools. As noted above, respondents were asked to complete items on the questionnaire pertaining to counselor certification and to supply explanatory materials relating to certification requirements and state standards.

Thirty-four states indicated that they had certification requirements for elementary school counselors. However, eleven states certify counselors for grades K-12 with no specific requirements for elementary certification. It thus appears that 23 states have certification standards and requirements developed specifically for counselors at the elementary level. Five additional states reported that certification requirements for elementary school counselors are now being developed. This finding contrasts with the earlier study by Van Hoose and Vafakas (1968) who found that only 14 states had elementary school counselor certification.

Printed materials pertaining to state standards, and policy or position statements on elementary school guidance were supplied by 28 respondents. Four additional states and one territory for a total of 33, report having specific standards for guidance in elementay schools. An additional 4 states report that standards are now being written. By contrast, the 1967 study revealed that 31 states and one territory had standards for elementary school guidance (Van Hoose and Vafakas 1968).

Discussion

The number of counselors working in elementary schools has grown substantially over the past two years. From a total of 3,837 in 1966-67, to 6,041 in 1968-69, represents a national increase of over 1,100 per year. While growth in numbers per se may not be a valid indices of progress, the upward trend in numbers does indicate increasing acceptance of counseling for elementary school children. For example, one of the most noticeable changes in a two year period has been in the number of programs supported locally. In 1967, 22 per cent or approximately 860 elementary school counselors were supported by local funds. At the present time, 36 per cent, or 2,164 counselors, are supported by the local school system. Thus, more counselors have been added under local financing than by any single federal reimbursement program.

This study also suggests a trend toward the requirement that elementary school counselors posses a masters degree in guidance and counseling. As noted above most elementary school counselors have their preparation in guidance and some respondents noted that this requirement will become a part of their standards.

Since the 1967 study 8 additional states have developed certification requirements. Thus a total of 23 states now have certification specifically for elementary school counselors. The present investigation also reveals that 33 states and one territory have developed standards for elementary school guidance.

In summary, elementary school guidance appears to have become an accepted aspect of elementary education. There has been steady, and

perhaps evan rapid, progress within the past decade. The encouraging increase in the number of programs supported by local efforts provides some evidence of the success of this movement.

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